

New Zealand government pledges “even closer” alliance with US under Donald Trump

Tom Peters
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New Zealand’s right-wing National Party-led coalition government lost no time congratulating the fascist Donald Trump on his victory in the United States presidential election and pledging to strengthen the military-intelligence alliance between the two countries.

Prime Minister Christopher Luxon issued a statement hailing the “strong and enduring” ties with the US and saying: “I look forward to developing even closer relations with the incoming Trump Administration.”

He stressed that “We will continue to work in partnership with the US to advance our shared long-term interests, particularly through further enhancing our trade and economic relationship and building security and resilience in the Indo-Pacific.”

New Zealand is a minor imperialist power with interests throughout the Pacific region and internationally. It is part of the US-led Five Eyes intelligence alliance (which also includes Australia, Canada and Britain). The country is integrated into US-led wars: the current government has sent military personnel to assist with the bombing of Yemen, and to Britain to provide training for Ukrainian conscripts in the US-NATO war against Russia.

Successive Labour Party and National Party governments have also supported the US militarisation of the Indo-Pacific in preparation for war against China. Discussions are underway for New Zealand to join the AUKUS military agreement, which involves the US and UK supplying Australia with nuclear-powered submarines and other weapons, along with military technology.

Speaking to Newstalk ZB on Thursday, Foreign Minister Winston Peters compared Trump’s victory to his own return to parliament as leader of the right-wing nationalist New Zealand First Party. “We’ve got a

similar pathway,” he said. “You see what happened after 2020, he went out and spoke to the people all around the United States and he got himself back.”

NZ First plays a major role in the current government despite being extremely unpopular and getting just over 6 percent of the vote in the 2023 election. It ran on a platform that mirrored Trump’s, with appeals to anti-immigrant and anti-transgender demagoguery, promises for more prisons and tougher “law and order” measures, and the promotion of anti-vaccination pseudo-science.

Peters lashed the media as “toxic” and “biased” for writing off both himself and Trump after 2020. He also criticised former Labour Party Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern for involving herself in the US election. Ardern joined the Democratic Party-aligned think tank, the Center for American Progress, and spoke at the Democratic National Convention in support of Kamala Harris.

NZ First was part of Ardern’s coalition government from 2017 to 2020. Peters served as foreign minister and deputy prime minister—the same positions he holds today—and played a central role alongside Ardern in strengthening ties with the first Trump administration and supporting a stronger US military presence in the Pacific.

Labour’s complete support for US imperialism was underscored by Ardern’s embrace of the war criminal Harris, who is directly responsible for the US-Israeli genocide in Gaza. The party’s position will not change under the Trump administration. Current Labour leader Chris Hipkins posted on X congratulating Trump on his victory.

In a statement, Labour’s ally the Greens’ foreign affairs spokesman Teanau Tuiono declared that the election “should be a wake-up call that our country

should steer clear of the AUKUS military pact.” He called Trump a “volatile firebrand with fascist leanings” and pointed to “US involvement in the atrocities in Gaza and elsewhere in the Middle East.” He called for “a return to the independent and principled approach to foreign affairs.”

This is sheer hypocrisy. The Greens were part of the Ardern coalition government for six years and backed New Zealand’s alliance with the US, including involvement in the war against Russia over Ukraine. The party previously supported Labour governments that sent troops to Iraq and Afghanistan, in support of criminal and predatory wars launched by the US.

The Greens and some Labour Party members are nervous that New Zealand’s rush to join the AUKUS agreement, which is so blatantly directed against China, will lead to economic blowback. China accounts for the majority of New Zealand’s trade. The Labour-Greens government, however, initiated discussions with the US and Australia about joining AUKUS, and pledged to significantly expand New Zealand’s military in preparation for war against China.

Working people must take Luxon and Peters’ pledges to line up closely with the fascist Trump as a serious warning. In response to the historic crisis of capitalism, the political establishment in every country is shifting rapidly to the right, turning to militarism abroad and preparing for authoritarian repression against the working class at home.

Trump has promised to deploy the US military against protesters and political opponents, including socialists, who he calls “the enemy within,” and to round up and deport millions of immigrants.

In New Zealand, the government is pouring funds into the military and building new prisons, while stoking nationalism and racist animosity towards indigenous Māori, in an effort to divide workers and divert anger over rising unemployment and brutal austerity measures.

The far-right ACT and NZ First Parties have a very narrow base of support. Like Trump, they have been able to gain political power by exploiting popular disillusionment and anger with what passes as “left,” in the absence of a genuine socialist alternative.

Like the Biden-Harris administration in the US, NZ Labour lost the 2023 election because of its responsibility for a profound social crisis. The Ardern

government carried out an historic transfer of wealth to the rich, producing soaring levels of inequality and homelessness. It also adopted the criminal “let it rip” strategy for COVID-19, which has led to thousands of deaths. The trade union bureaucracy, like its counterparts in the US, suppressed resistance to mass redundancies, healthcare and education cuts, and pro-corporate restructuring.

The task for workers and youth in New Zealand who want to defend democratic rights and oppose fascism and war, is to break from Labour and its allies and to build the Socialist Equality Group, which is fighting to establish the New Zealand section of the International Committee of the Fourth International. Only the struggle for socialism, by workers in every part of the world, can end the genocide and the escalating danger of a catastrophic world war, and bring about equality for all.



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